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DEPARTMENT FOR DRL/SEA, NSC FOR PASCUAL

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: OUTREACH TO EGYPTIAN DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS
ACTIVISTS

REF: A. 2007 CAIRO 2206

[B](#). 2007 CAIRO 2601

[C](#). 2007 CAIRO 3001

[D](#). STATE 44903

[E](#). CAIRO 902

Classified By: DCM Stuart Jones, for reason 1.4 (d).

[1](#). (U) Embassy Cairo continues to actively support and promote the President's Freedom Agenda. We are in close contact with the wide range of Egypt's political oppositionists, democracy and human rights activists, and journalists from independent and opposition newspapers, as well as bloggers who promote democracy and human rights. We regularly engage with a variety of GOE officials, including at the most senior-levels, to discuss both broad policy concerns and specific democracy and human rights cases. We regularly utilize public speaking opportunities and media outreach (including ambassadorial appearances on Egyptian satellite TV shows, reaching millions of Egyptians) to promote democratic ideals and reform. MEPI and USAID's Democracy and Governance programs constitute critical components of our mission's efforts. A detailed discussion of our democracy strategy programming was provided in ref C. The bimonthly meeting of the Institutions of Democracy Working Group (IDWG), chaired by the DCM, coordinates democracy policy and programs among USAID and the Embassy's Economic-Political and Public Affairs sections.

[2](#). (C) Since our last comprehensive report on support for the Freedom Agenda (ref A), the Ambassador held the following meetings with democracy and human rights activists:

- An August 2007 dinner with five leading Egyptian democracy activists (strictly protect): Hisham El Bastawisi (the Court of Cassation justice who was one of the two judges at the center of the spring 2006 "Judges Crisis," and a prominent and vocal advocate for judicial independence), Hafez Abou Seida (Director of the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights), Ghada Shahbender (head of "Shayfeenkum" or "We See You", a civil society organization focused on elections monitoring and anti-corruption initiatives), Nasser Amin (Director, Arab Center for the Independence of the Judiciary and the Legal Profession), and Amr Choubaki (a senior political analyst at the venerable Al Ahram Center, and one of the founding members of the political movement "Kefaya"). (Ref B)

- A mid-autumn 2007 meeting with the leadership of the National Council on Human Rights.

- A February 5, 2008 meeting with five activists who had traveled to the US as "Freedom House Fellows": Ahmed Samih (director of Al Andalus Institute for Tolerance and Anti-Violence Studies and editor-in-chief of Horeyatna online radio), Mozn Hassen (Director of Nazra for Feminist Studies Organization), Hamdy Kenawy (staff member of the Arab Penal Reform Organization, and a founding member of the Arab Center

for Documentation and Legally Pursuing War Criminals), Doaa Kassem (Executive Secretary of the Al Andalus Institute for Tolerance and Anti-Violence Studies, and a human rights trainer), and Marwa Mokhtar (human rights activist).

- A February 12 meeting with Gameela Ismail, the wife of imprisoned former Al Ghad party leader Ayman Nour. While she meets regularly with poloff, Ismail is hesitant to meet regularly with the Ambassador, evidently out of concern that such meetings could have negative ramifications on the continuing legal efforts to get her husband released.

- A mid-February meeting with Michael Meunier, President of the U.S. Copts Association and founder of the Egyptian NGO "Hand to Hand" (working to promote grass-roots political participation in Egypt). The Ambassador also attended a March opening reception for "Hand to Hand."

- Repeated meetings (separately) with Hisham Kassem (winner of the National Endowment for Democracy's 2007 Democracy Award, founder and former CEO of Al Masry Al Yom, Egypt's leading independent newspaper, and human rights activist), Barbara Ibrahim (wife of democracy activist Saad Eddin Ibrahim), and Ghada Shahbender (head of "Shayfeenkum").

- Democracy and human rights activists, political oppositionists, opposition parliamentarians, and journalists for independent newspapers were regularly invited to the Ambassador's residence for receptions.

13. (C) In addition, the DCM also held a January 22 dinner for several human rights activists: Soha Abdel Aty (Egyptian

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Initiative for Personal Rights), Hossam Bahgat (Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights), Moataz Al Fogairy (Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies), Engi Al Haddad (Afro-Egyptian Human Rights Organization), Bahey Al Din Hassan (Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies), Ahmed Samih (Al Andalus Institute for Tolerance), Hafez Abou Sa'eda (Egyptian Organization for Human Rights), and Mohamed Shalaby (Legal Aid Association for Constitutional Rights).
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